

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee September 15, 2005 Meeting – Minutes taken by Rob Gogan

Members Attending: Rob Gogan, Harvard University; Cornelia Herzfeld, Cambridge resident; David Johnston, Cambridge Housing Authority; Adam Mitchell, Save That Stuff; Cathy McCormick, Cambridge resident; Judy Nathans, Cambridge resident; Paul Schlaver, Cambridge Consumers Council

Guests Attending: Amy Donovan, MIT; Kevin Douglas, Russell Disposal; Kelly Dunn, Recycling Program Manager; Randi Mail, Cambridge Recycling Director; Doane Perry, Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association; Shauna Schiller, Casella/FCR; Ann Wasserman, MIT

Briefing on National Recycling Coalition Conference

Rob reported the two prominent themes at this year's conference held in Minneapolis: single stream recycling and zero waste. Single stream adds very little to processing costs while significantly expanding recycling tonnage by eliminating separation procedures for people that resist recycling because they view it as too troublesome or confusing. Net savings to municipalities, ranges from 5-10% with tonnage increase from 10-20%. Zero waste proponents acknowledged that their goal may seem unrealistic but pointed to San Jose (>75% recycling rate) and San Francisco (60% current recycling rate with 75% goal by 2008). SF has "2020 Vision" of zero waste of any kind: zero trash, zero air and water pollution, zero hazardous waste. Applies not only to City and its residents, but upstream impacts of all suppliers of goods to City.

Briefing on Solid Waste Association of North America Conference

Kevin Douglas reported that this was a great conference, but needs better attendance. He said that pay-as-you-throw is popular among MA municipalities and that single stream is not yet available to New England communities due to a lack of single stream processors. Two emerging trash issues: radiation alarms being set off by patients sent home from hospital after chemotherapy treatments with adult diapers. Russell trucks set off radiation alarms 6 times last year. Hypodermic needles in trash are a continuing problem. MA DEP issued its updated Solid Waste Master Plan in which now states that trash export will always be necessary due to difficulty in siting facilities. Committee discussion ensued about pay-as-you-throw and double standards for exporting trash and recycling since both are commodities.

New "Guide to Moving and Renovating in Cambridge"

Rand distributed this new 16-page full color brochure with extensive photos and graphics. Dawn Quirk, former Recycling Specialist, played a big role in developing it.

The Guide is a terrific resource for residents and students planning a move or renovation in Cambridge. 10,000 copies have been printed and Public Works is distributing them through partnerships with university housing offices, moving and truck rental companies, property management companies and realtors. Copies will also be increasingly available at popular venues in

Cambridge – please let Randi know if you'd like to volunteer to help distribute copies (rmail@cambridgema.gov).

The Guide includes information on a range of topics including how to handle waste from home renovations, how to recycle packing materials and properly dispose of hazardous waste, where to donate unwanted items and ideas for living green. The Guide includes the City's "Recycling and Trash Guidelines" and a map of Cambridge. View the guide www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/departments/recycle/moving.html. The Guide was promoted in the recent MIT *Bale*.

"Cambridge Life" Magazine

Randi also gave out this biannual publication recently taken over by the City and managed by Ini Tomeu, the City's Public Information Officer. This issue has articles on Cambridge pre-schools, housing, employment and a 2-page spread on recycling! Recycling information focused on paper and cardboard recycling in particular since up to 1500 tons of paper waste could still be recycled each year. Another feature offered toters just for paper to recycling homeowners. Made possible by a DEP grant, Public Works has about 250 toters to distribute to owner-occupied households.

Doane mentioned the proposed changes to the Ordinance under Council consideration to further address rodent problems in the City: requiring trash in barrels not bags and not allowing waste to be set out before 6pm the day before collection. He said that the Rat Control meeting made no mention of any correlation of composting and rats.

Opportunity to Co-Sponsor Event with MIT

Randi described the free offering by a North Andover-based company, Shred Pro, to stage a free event for residents and the MIT community. She was interested in the opportunity since some residents express concerns about identity theft from recycling their papers curbside. Paul Schlaver explained that the most common method of identity theft is from data companies keeping unsecured databases and employees illegally selling lists of consumer information. Since names and addresses can be retrieved from the phonebook, internet, etc, Randi recommended that only papers with account numbers or social security numbers be blacked out, torn up, or shredded.

Since the City decided against sponsoring the event directly, MIT offered a parking lot to stage the event. The Committee discussed the possibility for Cambridge Recycling Inc, to co-sponsor the event with the MIT Working Group on Recycling. After much discussion, Committee members decided that the event may feed people's paranoia about identity theft and discourage paper recycling. The Committee agreed to think about holding a different event that clearly promoted recycling, possible themes include reducing junk mail.

Market Update

Shauna distributed the September Yellow Sheet with the month's recycled fiber prices. Hurricane Katrina increased demand but closure of a big mill in Albany and elsewhere reduced demand. Net effect is a wash. Randi mentioned that FCR now accepts clean plant pots and noted that the new Recycling & Trash Guidelines indicate that. The primary end destination for #3-7 plastics has been Haycore in Ontario, a pallet manufacturer.

Random Tidbits

- Kelly has met all of the school custodians.
- Russell will offer school presentations on recycling to Cambridge classrooms as part of their contract.
- Beginning November 1, 2005, in terms of plastics, the Drop-Off Center will only accept plastic film and

packaging peanuts. Foam packaging and unnumbered firm plastics will not be accepted. Later in the fall a baler will be installed to bale plastic bags and film. Packaging peanuts will continue to be reused by area businesses. Eliminating firm and foam plastics will allow us to collect bulkier and heavier materials like wood and more scrap metal, which will move us towards recycle 40% of our waste.

- The pilot project with C.J. Mabardy concluded in which bulky waste such as furniture and mattresses were collected at the curb during the heavy move-in and move-out weeks in May, June, August and September. Mabardy recycled the wood and metal and sent all other materials to Conigliaro for recycling. The City will discuss further opportunities to continue this type of project with Mabardy, specifically drop off.
- The Public Works Department submitted a grant proposal to DEP regarding compost collection from businesses and schools. Letters of support were submitted by Adam Mitchell from Save That Stuff, Jane Smillie from CitySprouts, Jim Maloney from the School Department and Kelly Clark from the Chamber of Commerce.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM.